
An Exposition of
Some Criticisms against
Khilafat-i-Rashida

by

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Foreword

Present democratic ways of thinking lead people to an inquiring study of the institution of Khilafat in Islam which emerges as a unique religio-political system while meeting the electoral aspirations of the people and at the same time giving religious sanctity to the office of Khilafat. Scholars are however likely to meet with some criticism of Khilafat and these have been masterly classified into five categories by Maulana Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad, the former Missionary in Charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in East Africa. In his speech delivered at the Annual Ahmadiyya Muslim gathering of 1976 held in Rabwah, Pakistan, the Maulana gave a rationale of these objections and I feel greatly pleased to write this foreword to its English rendering by Mr. Kabir Ahmad Bhatti.

It is my hope that while the following discourse will lead many to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the institution of Khilafat, it will help others, particularly the followers of Islam, to guard the institution zealously and to give it their unstinted loyalty which it strongly deserves. I feel confident that our younger generation will derive special satisfaction from the book and draw fruitful conclusions from the concise narrative which lavishly quotes from historical facts and authentic and authoritative sources of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet of Islam and his companions and saints of repute who followed in the annals of Islam to-date.

B. A. Rafiq,
Imam of the London Mosque.
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The Institution of Khilafat

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them successors in the earth as He made successors from among those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear; they will worship Me. Then whoso is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious.” (Ch. 24:56)

Before proceeding with the exposition of criticism against Khilafat, it is important to bear in mind that the institution of Khilafat is the heavenly means of sustaining the unity of Islam and fostering its spiritual strength. The growth and power which Islam and its followers gained during the times of the Khilafat of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Omar need no mention, but when during the times of Hazrat Usman certain rebellious elements made the unholy attempt of destroying the institution of Khilafat and killing its occupant, its jugular importance was brought home by Abdallah bin Salam, an ex-Jewish scholar who had embraced Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet, who addressed the crowds as follows:

“Hearken ye to my words! The Sword of Allah is still not unsheathed. The angels of heaven have made this town of the Holy Prophet, their abode. Fear God and abstain from creating hardship for Usman. If you are bent upon taking his life, then beware! The heavenly angels will desert this town and the divine sword will be drawn and will remain unsheathed till the end of days.”

The companions of the Holy Prophet may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, held the firm belief that Khilafat was a

guarantor for the growth and power of Islam and its followers, without which its unity could not be preserved. How prophetic were the words of Usman when he warned the mutineers:

“If you succeed in killing me, you shall never be able to remain united, nor able to offer your prayers or face the enemy in unity.” (*Tabri*, Vol. III, p. 482).

The Meaning of Khilafat-e-Rashida

Ordinarily speaking, Khilafat-e-Rashida is understood to mean the period of succession to the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, beginning with the Khilafat of Abu Bakr in the 12th year after Hijra and ending with the Khilafat of Ali in the 40th year. However, from a saying of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, reported by Huzaifa, it can be construed that Khilafat-e-Rashida consists of two eras—the first as mentioned above and the second to occur in later days. The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said:

Prophethood shall remain among you as long as God shall will. He will bring about its end and follow it with Khilafat on the precepts of prophethood for as long as He shall will and then bring about its end. An unimaginative kingship shall then follow to remain as long as God shall will and then come to an end. There shall then be a cruel rule which shall remain as long as God shall will and come to an end upon his decree. There will then emerge Khilafat on the precept of Prophethood. The Holy Prophet said no more. (*Masnad-i-Ahmad* as quoted by *Mishqat* in *Babul Inzar-wa-Tahzir*).

The First Era of Khilafat-e-Rashida

From this prophecy of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, therefore, it is clear that the Khilafat which would come into being after him would consist of two eras – one would follow immediately after his death and between the other would intervene a period of suppressive, oppressive and cruel regimes. The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, defined the span of the first era as well. Safina reports that she heard the Holy Prophet say:

“Khilafat shall reign for 30 years and then there shall be monarchy.” (Mishkat, Kitabul Fitn)

This is exactly what happened, in that the first Khalifa was Abu Bakr, the second Omar, the third Usman and the fourth Ali, who were elected to their august offices by democratic means of one description or another and covered a span of thirty years as prophesied by the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The Second Era of Khilafat-e-Rashida

From the citings of Huzaifa mentioned earlier, it is clear that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had prophesied about the second era of Khilafat-e-Rashida and had said that after the first era a long period of unimaginative, oppressive and suppressive regimes would intervene before the draw of the second era. It is significant to note that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, specified no time limit for the second era, and this, coupled with the words that “the Holy Prophet said no more” occurring in Huzaifa’s report could well be construed to mean that the second era shall last for a long long time, or perhaps for ever. This is certainly the view of Hazrat Ismail Shaheed who was one of the

great thinkers and scholars of Islam. After a lengthy discourse in his book “*Mansab-e-Imamat*” he writes:

“Khalifa Rashid is a person who holds the office of Imamat and effervesces divine prudence. Whosoever is bestowed with this office, therefore, is a Khalifa Rashid irrespective of whether he lived in earlier or present times or comes into being in later days ... It is not correct to say that Khilafat-i-Rashida was confined to the period of the first four Khalifas, or to its second era alone.” (*Mansab-e-Imamat*, pp. 77 and 78).

Khilafat-e-Rashida-An Everlasting Era

Apart from the Quranic verse of Khilafat and Huzaifa’s report of the Holy Prophet, the Promised Messiah, who is the exponent of Islam in this age, has confirmed the continuance of Khilafat-e-Rashida beyond the earlier era of thirty years. In *Al-Wassiyat*, p. 6-7, he says:

“Therefore, do not be grieved by that which I have told you and let not your hearts suffer anxiety, for it is necessary for you to see the Qudrat-e-Thaniyya (the second manifestation of Divine Power).

Its coming is the better for you for it is permanent and will not be cut off till the Day of Judgment. This second manifestation will not happen till after my departure.” (*The Will*, pp. 6-7).

Furthermore, he writes in *Shahadatul Quran*, p. 58:

“Since it is not possible for a man to live for ever, God has planned to keep alive, forever up to the last days, His messengers who bear a mark of distinction over the rest of His creatures. To this end he has established the

institution of Khilafat so that the world shall never remain without the blessings of prophethood.”

The two eras of Khilafat-e-Rashida were described by the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as “Khilafat on the precepts of prophethood” and he enjoined upon believers to:

“Follow in my footsteps and in the footsteps of Kholafa-e-Rashidin who were fully guided” (*Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Vol. IV).

The exaltation of Khilafat to Prophethood’s precepts and so much exhortation of believers to adhere to the institution was necessary because through Khilafat is not only righteousness secured, and the mission of establishing the unity of God, preserving Islam and consummating its beliefs accomplished, but it also leads to the spiritual and temporal growth and strength of the believers.

Criticism of the Institution of Khilafat

It is natural that equally detractive forces should come into play and these tend to impede the blessing of Khilafat through various obstacles. Through doubts and machinations, criticism and propaganda they try to cause disturbance in the minds of believers and force them away from their goal. History bears witness to the fact that this type of opposition has been faced by both eras of Khilafat-e-Rashida. They were attacked not only by outsiders but also by those professing to be within the fold of Islam but nevertheless have obviously been contaminated by wayward western philosophy and shallow permissiveness and democracies. Some nonchalant hypocrites to whom any discipline is virile also adorn these galleries. These attacks are of various descriptions, but today we shall confine ourselves to only five of the most important allegations and try to give a realistic appraisal of them.

I. Is Khilafat Individual?

The Holy Quran Promises Collective Khilafat Rather Than Individual Khilafat

The first criticism of Khilafat is that the relevant verse in the Holy Quran uses plural nouns e.g., “Allah has promised to those among you who believe” is plural, “That He will surely make them successors” is also plural and so are the rest of the, prepositions used in the verse, indicating that Khilafat is a collective institution rather than an office for an individual.

This misconception arises out of ignorance about the Quranic usage and actual illustrations of God’s practice in the past which show that quite often promises uttered for a nation are accomplished through individuals. For instance:

And remember when Moses said to his people. O my people, Call to mind Allah’s favour upon you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings, and gave you what He gave not to any other among the peoples. (Ch. 5:21)

Here the address is made to the people as a whole who are reminded of the blessings of having been made kings and prophets, yet it is known that not all the people had been so exalted and there had always been a large populace of ordinary working people. It proves therefore that promises made in a collective sense are deemed fulfilled through individual beneficiaries. This conforms with the interpretation of the Holy Prophet and his companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as well. The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said:

“I urge you to fear Allah and to listen and obey your leader even though he may be a negro slave.” (Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Vol. IV)

Thus, the person who is exhorted to be followed here is described as an individual leader or Emir. At the time of Abu Bakr’s ascension to Khilafat there was an argument between the two factions of the community-Ansar and Muhajireen-and it was suggested that each one should have their own Emir. This was strongly resisted by Omar and other dignitaries amongst the companions who reasoned that a sheath was never big enough for two swords. Omar is also reported to have reminded the people of a saying of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, forbidding the appointment of two Emirs at one and the same time. As a result, Abu Bakr was elected Khalifa to the Holy Prophet as an individual and this was held to be conforming strictly to the letter and spirit of the Quranic verse on Khilafat. In addition, the verse itself provides support for this interpretation where it says: “*He will surely make them successors have the earth as He made successors from among those before them ...*” That is to say, if in olden times a corporate body was given the responsibilities of Khilafat, one should expect the same pattern emerging now, but if it were individuals who succeeded as Khalifas in the past, the same system would continue henceforth. The words “As he made successors” have therefore removed all doubts about the authenticity of individual Khilafat and banished the idea of having a corporate body as Khalifa for good. In another place, the Holy Quran states:

“And consult with them on all important matters, but when you have made up your mind then place your trust in Allah.” (Surah Aal-e-Imran)

That is to say, consultation with individuals or bodies thereof is necessary but once the Prophet has made up his mind, he should proceed with implementation of this decision, placing his absolute trust in Allah. The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said that this verse was a blessing for his people so that anyone who complied with it would meet with success but whosoever disregarded it would perish. It means therefore that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not regard this verse as applicable to himself alone but applied it to his successors as individuals, as indeed the word ‘Shavir’ indicates. A similar wording was applied in regard to the collection of Zakat or poor tax: God addressed the Holy Prophet saying “Take Zakat from their Wealth.” Upon the death of the Holy Prophet, some people refused to pay this tax saying that the instruction to collect it had been given to the Holy Prophet and as he was no longer alive, the instruction had lapsed. But Abu Bakr, the first Khalifa, refuted this interpretation and ascribed the injunction relating to the collection of Zakat as applicable to the successors of the Holy Prophet as well.

In addition, we have proof in God’s Own doing for the establishment of individual Khilafat instead of a corporate entity. If He had intended a corporate body to succeed the Holy Prophet, He would have allowed this to happen, but what we witness is the fact that despite tendencies to the contrary, an individual was chosen as Khalifa.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that the addressing of the Khilafat’s promise to the people collectively and the usage of plural nouns in the verse has significant meanings. Firstly, it was intended to convey the fact that Khilafat would not be confined to one or two individuals but would extend to a considerable number of individuals from amongst the followers and

the institution would continue in operation up to the last day. Secondly, it was intended that the believers should realise that the office of Khilafat was not an individual's hereditary right but was to be bestowed upon a deserving individual through popular election latently supported by Allah's hand.

II. Can Khilafat Lead To Dictatorship?

The second criticism of Khilafat-e-Rashida is that if it means an individual Khalifa, it is likely to lead to dictatorship, for the accumulation of vast powers in one individual's hand, without the corresponding checks and balances available in a corporate body, is susceptible to abuse. This criticism arises out of lack of knowledge both of the institution of Khilafat-e-Rashida and its distinctive characteristics and of the real stature of those who occupied this office in the past.

Distinctive Features of Khilafat-e-Rashida

The Promised Reformer, the Second Successor to the Promised Messiah, has listed the special features which distinguish Khilafat-e-Rashida from monarchial sovereignty and other powers and I have the privilege of setting them below:

In Islam, Khilafat-e-Rashida has seven distinctive features:

1. **Election**—God says in the Holy Quran: “Indeed Allah orders you to bestow trusts upon those best suited to them.” Here the word used is “trusts”, but since it occurs in the context of government, it means the trust of government. The method of elections has been left to believers to decide. As Khilafat in those early days was political as well as religious, it was decided by the believers that the election should be held by the companions of the Holy Prophet, who knew the faith well, and also, the person who was well versed in it. It is possible to have different rules regarding elections, according to different times, and had Khilafat continued after the life-time of the companions they would certainly have given consideration to the devising of relevant methods. The point however is that Khilafat is

elective and the method of election has been left open to believers.

2. **Sharia**—A Khalifa is under the yoke of Sharia (Law). He can reject the counsel of his advisers but he cannot ignore the laws of Sharia. Thus, although he is a constitutional head, he is not absolutely free.
3. **Consultation**—In addition to the control of Sharia, he is subject to consultations as well. In all important matters he is bound to consult his colleagues and to follow their advice as far as possible.
4. **Morals**—Since a Khalifa is the religious head as well as the leader of obligatory prayers, he feels morally and sub-consciously obliged to lead a righteous path but this situation does not apply to a political leader, whether elected or not.
5. **Equality**—A Khalifa is equal to other fellow beings in human rights. He can secure his rights through the judicial system just as people can obtain their rights from him through the same process.
6. **Providential protection**—As he is a component of the religious machine, a Khalifa has been promised providential protection from major mistakes liable to bring about disastrous consequences. In such situations he is assured of God's succour and help against adversaries. This unique position is not available to any other type of leader.
7. **Non-political**—He is not aligned to any political party and his position is that of a father. God says: "When you adjudicate, do so with justice" i.e. a person in the position of Khalifa should exercise complete justice, leaning neither

to an individual nor to a party (*Al-Furqan*, Khilafat Issue, July 1958).

Basic Distinction Between Khilafat and Dictatorship

It is evident from the foregoing that Khilafat-e-Rashida is the end result of an elective process which has not been defined but left open to suit the prevailing times. Then the person elected has been made subject to the laws of Sharia with the obligation to abide by every one of its injunctions. At the same time it has been made necessary for him to take counsel from his colleagues on all important matters which have a national bearing and to follow their advice as far as possible, departing there from only in the case of absolute conscience, in which event he can proceed with his own decision placing his trust in Allah. He has his own moral standards to control him, for he is the religious head and leader of obligatory prayers for believers. His mental and subconscious frame so composed keep him on the right course under spiritual guidance from Allah. Again, he is equal among fellow human beings as far as individual rights are concerned and this position is hardly applicable to other leaders. He can sue and be sued like any other person. He enjoys providential protection so that God saves him from catastrophic decisions and affords him His help in hours of dire need. Finally, he is above politics and is enjoined to exercise absolute justice, leaning neither to an individual nor to a party.

Having looked at the personal attributes of Rashid Khalifas and having examined the electoral procedure and also having studied the Quranic teachings on the subject and the sayings of the Holy Prophet, it is clear that the seven distinctive features enumerated above are found in full in the institution of Khilafat-iRashida. These features make it impossible for a Khalifa to become a dictator nor is it possible for the system to degenerate into a catastrophic instrument for its people. Indeed

the rulers who are bereft of these distinctive features are liable to the evils of dictatorship who feel free to do whatever they will to the utter disregard of law and order and thus lead their people to death and decay. But Rashid Khalifas who are under the laws of Sharia and under obligation to seek counsel from their colleagues become a shield for their people and bring about comfort and prosperity. This is why Abu Bakr once told the people of Medina that they would be consulted in every matter and nothing would be done without their unanimous consent (*Tabri*, Vol. I). Omar is also reported to have said:

“O’ people, you have certain rights against me which I shall enumerate and which it is for you to secure from me. It is your right that I should not misuse any of the taxes or booties which may be bestowed upon you by God. It is your right to obtain satisfaction of your rights from me. It is your right to enjoy my protection ... and that I should look after your families like a father when you are absent on wars.” (*Al-Farooq Omar* by Mohammad Husain Haikel)

Usman once addressed his people as follows:

“Hearken, I am a faithful follower rather than an innovator; apart from following the Quran and the precepts of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, I pledge myself to three promises before you. First, I shall follow the procedures and systems agreed by you before my Khilafat. Secondly, I shall seek your advice in regard to any practices for which no procedure has already been agreed upon. Thirdly, I shall control myself against exercising penal proceedings against you unless they are fully sanctioned

by the Law of God and the precepts of the Holy Prophet.”
(Tabri, Vol. III, p. 446)

History fails to find any rulers and dictators rising to similar high morals and making such candid pledges.

The Necessity of Obedience to Khilafat-e-Rashida

Since a Rashid Khalifa stands in the footsteps of the Prophet in order to complete his mission, to expand his following, to create unity and strength of his people and personally bear the noble characteristics enumerated in the foregoing, it becomes essential that he should be followed completely faithfully. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: “Anyone who follows my Emir shall be regarded as having followed me but anyone who disobeys My Emir shall be regarded as having disobeyed Me”. The same loyalty was echoed by the elders of Ahmadiyyat upon the election of Maulana Hakim Noor-ud-Deen as the first Khalifa to the Promised Messiah, when they declared: “In future, every command of Hazrat Maulvi Sahib would have the same authority as had the command of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, on whom be peace.” (Badr, 2/6/1908).

Difference Between Khalifa Rashid and a Dictator

The big difference between a Dictator and Khalifa Rashid is that while the former is more concerned about interests of his personal power, the latter is mostly busy in the welfare of his people, and while the world is asleep, he supplicates before his Lord for their well-being. Thus says Musleh Maood, the Second Successor to the Promised Messiah:

“For you there is a well-wisher who loves you and shares your woes and afflictions and prays for you before God.

Other people have none like this available to them. Your Khalifa is concerned about your welfare and intercedes God on your behalf while others have none to do this for them.” (*Barakat-e-Khilafat*)

It is certainly not possible for any Dictator to show this type of intimate concern for his people, nor to have the desire of suffering nightly inconveniences in prayers for them. This is because the institution of Khilafat belongs to spiritual realms and is bound by the seven special features making it impossible for dictatorship to creep in or evil consequences to crop out.

III. Elected by People and Chosen by God

The third criticism of Khilafat-e-Rashida from the so-called democrats is that how can an elected Khalifa be regarded as having been chosen by God? As is known, after the demise of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his companions gathered together at Banu Saida's place and elected Abu Bakr as the first Khalifa after considerable discussion. For the Khilafat of Omar, Abu Bakr had various consultations with appropriate people, and similarly the third and the fourth Khalifas came to their offices through various electoral methods. To say therefore that they were chosen by God is, for opponents, very difficult to understand.

Indirect Selection by God

There is no doubt about the accuracy of the argument but we must not forget that the result of elections is in fact indirect selection by God who manipulates the minds of electors to accord with His wishes. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has directed his followers not only to follow his own footsteps but also those of Rashid Khalifas who are duly guided by God. Had their election not had the approval of God, the Holy Prophet would certainly not have given such an assiduous instruction for the obedience of Khalifas.

God's Hand in Indirect Selection

It is by no means against the terminology of the Quran to describe something as having been done by God even though it might have been physically performed by human beings. At the time of the battle of Badr, it was the small palm of the Holy Prophet's hand which threw a handful of dust towards the enemy

and which rapidly developed into a sandstorm through the powers of God.

“It was not you who threw the dust but it was God who threw it.” (*Surah Al-Anfal*, Verse 18)

The subsequent development of the dust into a sandstorm supports the fact that the throwing of a handful of dust by the Holy Prophet had the full approval of God resulting in the complete annihilation of the enemy which was then at least three times the strength of the believers.

God’s Hand Moves in the Shadows

In the same fashion, through the elective powers of His believers, God manifests His choice and subsequently reinforces His approval by lending support and help to His chosen one and by showing various signs through him. For this reason, even though a Khalifa may be a physically weak and fragile person, he succeeds in his assignments with flying colours, all through the Grace and Mercy of God. There should be no difficulty in understanding this phenomenon but for those who require convincing through tangible arguments, we would venture to quote Quranic verses and their authoritative interpretations from the Holy Prophet, his Companions and from the Reformer of this age, the Promised Messiah, in verity of our case.

Khilafat Ascribed to Allah

A study of the Holy Quran reveals the fact that Khilafat has always been shown to emanate from Allah, whatever description it might take. In the Holy Quran, there are four types of Khilafat and each one of them has been ascribed to Allah.

“O Dawood, We have made you Khalifa on this earth.” (Surah Sad)

Dawood was a Prophet chosen by God, but at the same time God had appointed him as Khalifa. Secondly, the people of a Prophet are also described as “Khalifa” in the Holy Quran:

“Your Lord is about to destroy your enemy and make you Khalifas’ in the land, that He may see how you act” (Surah Al-Aaraf, Verse 130)

Thirdly, the descendants of a people are also described as “Khalifas”:

“He is who made you ‘Khalifa’ in the land.” (Surah Al-Anaam, Verse 166)

In the fourth place, a section of the faithfuls has also been given the name of ‘Khalifa’ e.g.,

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Khalifas in the earth as he made ‘Khalifas’ from among those who were before them.” (Surah Nur)

Thus, all the four types of Khalifas have been ascribed to God.

Quaranic Authority for Khalifa

From the verses just quoted, it is clear that the Holy Quran lends its authority to, the appointment of Khalifas as successors to a Prophet. Firstly, it is a ‘Promise’ from God to appoint Khalifas, secondly the Arabic words used bear the assertive prepositions of “Iam” and “double noon”, and this is followed by further assertive promises of giving the Khalifas unusual strength and of transforming disorder into order and peace.

Votes Not Enough

With such “promise” and “support” from God it is a complete mis-reading of the facts that the appointment of a Khalifa merely depends on the counting of votes. With such vehement assertions from God in regard to the choice of Khalifas by Him, with a view to manifesting His Power and Glory, it is not possible to ascribe their appointment to any other source except that of God. The Promised Messiah, describing the Khilafat of Abu Bakr in “Al-Wassiyyat” has stated as follows:

“He who remains steadfast throughout witnesses this miracle as happened at the time of the death of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, when his Companions were overwhelmed by grief and many of the desert Arabs resiled from Islam. At that time God Almighty manifested His power a second time and by establishing Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq as the Successor of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, saved Islam from ruin and thus fulfilled his promise: ‘Allah has promised those among you who believe and act righteously that He will surely make them successors in the earth as He made those successor who were before them; that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that after their state of fear He will grant them peace and security’ (*The Will*, pp. 6-7).

Thus, although it were the companions of the Holy Prophet, who had gathered together to elect Abu Bakr as their Khalifa, his appointment was regarded as having been made by God under the authority of the Quranic verse in the foregoing.

Authority From the Holy Prophet

From the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also we derive similar authority. Aisha, who was one of the

consorts of the Holy Prophet and about whom he had exhorted his followers to learn half of the tenets of Islam, is said to have related as follows:

“The Holy Prophet said that he had intended to call in Abu Bakr and hand him a writing for his Khilafat, so that after the death of the Holy Prophet, other claimants to the office might not arise, but then the Prophet did not pursue the idea believing that God would not accept the election of any other person besides Abu Bakr as Khalifa, nor would the believers agree otherwise.” (*Bukhari, Kitabul Ah-Kam, Babul Istikhlaq*)

It is clear therefore that since the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, firmly believed that it was entirely the preserve of God to appoint a Khalifa, he declined to issue any writing for the appointment of Abu Bakr to the office.

Similarly, Hafsa, who was the daughter of Omar and was also one of the consorts of the Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

“The Holy Prophet once said that after him, Abu Bakr shall be the Khalifa and thereafter Omar would be the Khalifa. I asked how did he know this and he replied that God the Omniscient had told him so.” (*Tafsir Qummi, Surah Tahreem*)

Furthermore, it is related by Usman, the third Khalifa to the Holy Prophet, that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, once told him:

“God will grant you a robe and hypocrites will try to snatch it from you, but you must never part with it.” (*Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*)

The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, thus gave the tidings of Khilafat to Usman and at the same time warned him of the demands to step down by certain quarters, but exhorted him to stay steadfast to the office. To the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, therefore, the office of Khilafat belonged to the preserves of God and it therefore commanded an appropriate dignity and decorum.

The Belief of Abu Bakr

Abu Bakr, the first Khalifa also believed in the same way. He is reported to have declared:

“God has appointed me as Khalifa among you in order that I may create brotherly unity among you and to establish the faith.”

Abu Bakr knew full well that after the death of the Holy Prophet, the believers had gathered together and unanimously elected him to be their Khalifa, yet he told them emphatically that his appointment derived its sanction from God as a sign of mercy upon them from Him.

The Belief of Omar

Omar, the second Khalifa, also had the same belief. He is reported to have declared:

“Anyone who needs monetary help, should come to me, as God has made me the Treasurer and Disburser.” (Tarikh Omar bin Khatab, p. 87)

The Belief of Usman

The third Khalifa, Usman, held the same belief. He is reported to have addressed a gathering saying:

“And then God appointed Abu Bakr as Khalifa, and by God, I never disobeyed him nor tried to cheat him.” (Bukhari, Kitabul Hijrat-ul-Habsha)

When the mutineers reached their climax and demanded Usman's abdication from the office of Khilafat, he told them emphatically:

“I am not going to part with this robe of Khilafat which God Almighty has bestowed upon me.” (Tabri, Vol. V, p. 121)

Had Usman believed that Khilafat had been won by him through the popular vote, he would have gladly acceded to the demands of the people and left the office at their behest. But he refused to resign the office because he believed it to be derogatory to the dignity of God's office of Khilafat to leave it except in consequence of the Will of God.

The Belief of Ali

Ali, the fourth Khalifa, held the same belief, i.e., once the people have chosen a person to be their Khalifa, his appointment is then regarded as having been approved by God. He is reported to have written to Amir Mu'awia:

“The people who have sworn their oath of allegiance to me are the same who swore a similar oath to Abu Bakr, using the same formula as before. Those who were witness to the appointment have no option to retract, and those who were absent from the occasion have no right to reject. The consultative voting was effected by Muhajirin and Ansar and once they have agreed to the appointment of a Khalifa as their leader, it attains the seal of God's pleasure and approval.”

The View of the Promised Messiah

The Promised Messiah, who was raised by God as the Reformer of Islam in this age has also given the same verdict corroborating the fact that a Khalifa is appointed by God. In answer to a question as to why the Holy Prophet of Islam did not appoint a Khalifa in his life time, the Promised Messiah said:

“The reason was that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, knew full well that God would appoint the Khalifa because it is His prerogative and there can be no flaw in God’s choice. Thus, He appointed Abu Bakr as the first Khalifa just as He had made him the first believer of Islam” (*Al-Hakam*, 14/4/1908)

In addition, the Promised Messiah says:

“Brethren! As this has been the way of Allah from the beginning that He manifest His powers in two ways so as to wipe out the false joy of the opponents, it is not possible that in this law God Almighty would depart from His established way. Therefore, you should not be grieved by that which I have told you and let not your hearts suffer anxiety, for it is necessary for you to see the second manifestation of Divine Power. Its coming is better for you for it is permanent and will not be cut off till the Day of Judgement. This second manifestation will not happen till after my departure; but when I depart, God will send this second manifestation to you and it will remain with you forever, according to the Divine Promise which is mentioned in *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya*.” (*Al-Wasiyyat*, p. 7)

The Second Manifestation is nothing else but Khilafat, as is explained in page 6 of Al-Wasiyyat already cited earlier. (*ibid.*)

Thus, according to the Promised Messiah, Second Manifestation means Khilafat which follows a Prophet and which is established by God so that its occupant has His blessings and who is in fact His nominee.

Stand Taken by Promised Messiah's Khalifas

Naturally, we are bound by the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet and must also follow the beliefs of the Promised Messiah and other dignitaries of Islam, especially the sayings of the Holy Prophet which he enjoined at the occasion of his last Haj that Muslims follow steadfastly the precepts of his Khalifas. The same stand has in fact been taken by the Khalifas of the Promised Messiah. For instance, Maulana Nur-ud-Deen, the first Khalifa emphatically declared:

“I have told you repeatedly and have demonstrated it from the Holy Quran that it is not the part of man to establish a Khalifa; it is the function of God Almighty. Who appointed Adam to the office of Khilafat? God says: ‘I am going to make you a Khalifa on earth.’

“I solemnly declare that God appointed me as Khalifa just as He had appointed Adam, Abu Bakr and Omar as Khalifas.” (*Badr*, 4/7/1912)

“It is God Who has appointed me Khalifa, and He knows best. No one has the power to remove a Khalifa appointed by God ... False is the person who claims that he made the appointment.” (*Al-Hakam*, 21.1/1914)

“You can derive no benefit by agitating this question. No one will make any of you Khalifa, nor can anyone else become Khalifa in my lifetime. When I die it will be only that one concerning whom God so wills who will become Khalifa and God will raise him to this office Himself. You have made a covenant with me. You should not raise the question of Khalifa. God has made me Khalifa and now I cannot be set aside by any of you, nor has anyone the power to set me aside. If you persist in your attitude then remember that I have with me those who like Khalid bin Waleed will chastise you as rebels.” (*Badr*, 4/7/1912)

The Second Successor to the Promised Messiah corroborates the same belief which he solemnly reiterated in a letter as follows:

“I swear by God at whose command lies my soul and Who is he Master of judgment, disgrace and accreditation that I am the Khalifa appointed by God.” (Letter dated 1927)

After this solemn declaration, he remained a Khalifa for another 38 years and God bestowed upon him unusual successes and victories.

Stand of Ancient Dignitaries

The dignitaries of Islam in past ages have always held the belief that a Khalifa is appointed by God and not by people who, although they hold an election, are nevertheless latently controlled and guided by God. Hazrat Shah Wali-Ullah Shah, Muadith Dehlavi, one of the top saints and a Reformer of Islam of his times has said:

“The verse of the Holy Quran that God shall make Khalifas out of Believers means that whenever God decrees that

there should be someone to undertake reformation of people, He casts in the minds of the people to elect a Khalifa whom He pleases.” (*Izalatul Kholafa An Khilafatul Kholafa*, Vol. I p. 9)

Re-affirming the dogma that Khilafat is a prerogative of God, Hazrat Musleh Mau’ud the Second Successor to the Promised Messiah has elaborated as follows:

“Remember that a Khalifa is appointed by God. False is the person who claims that a Khalifa is a public appointee. The First Khalifa to the Promised Messiah kept stressing the teaching throughout his Khilafat that a Khalifa is appointed by God rather than man. Indeed a study of the Quran reveals that every description of Khilafat has been ascribed to God.” (*Kon Hai Jo Khuda Ke Kam Ko Rok Sake*, p. 3)

In his Commentary of the Holy Quran, he states further:

“Khalifa is appointed by God rather than by men. Indeed there are circumstances in which it is impossible for a man to become Khalifa and yet he emerges as a Khalifa in the end. The words in the verse “God has promised to those among you who believe and act righteously” themselves show that God himself appoints a Khalifa, for it is only logical that He who promises to do a thing should appear to fulfil the promise, rather than that a promise should be made by someone and fulfilled by another.” (*Tafseer Kabir, Surah Nur*)

We feel obliged to emphasise this point at some length for the simple reason that once it is firmly established that Khilafat is

established by God, many misunderstandings and unjustified criticisms can be dispensed with without further difficulty.

IV. Demands of Abdication

The fourth criticism against Khilafat-e-Rashida is that according to its principles it is beyond retrieval. In other words, if a Khalifa becomes incapable of discharging his duties he cannot be removed from the office, whereas the demands of good organisation require that someone more active should take his place. It should be remembered however that Khilafat is a spiritual pedestal and a blessing from God which comes into being as a result of God's mysterious schemes and revelations in order to consummate a prophet's mission. Therefore the question of abdication is irrelevant. These blessings do not disappear with the physical incapability of a Khalifa or through his age or incapacity. The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, instructed Usman not to cast away the robe of Khilafat, which God shall bestow up on him, under any pressure from people, and Usman who knew the true value of the office, the importance which the Holy Prophet attached to it, and the dignity which was conferred upon it by God, held steadfast against the demands for his abdication until he lost his life. There is indeed no logic in their abdication and the only way they can leave their office is through their death. Maulana Hakim Nur-ud-Din, the first Khalifa to the Promised Messiah once declared:

“Remember, it is not within your power to set me aside. If you find any fault in me, invite my attention to it, but in a respectful manner. It is not for man to make anyone a Khalifa, it is God's own business . . . If I have been made Khalifa this is God's doing, in accordance with His design. It is true that He has made me a Khalifa for your good. No power can set aside a Khalifa appointed by God. No one of you has the power or strength to set me aside. If God Almighty wills to set me aside, He will cause me to die.

You must commit this matter to God. You have not the power to set me aside. I am not grateful to any of you. The person who says that He has made me Khalifa utters a falsehood.” (*Al-Hakam*, 21/1/1914)

Therefore, if an appointment has the sanction from God, there can be no question of interfering with it by man. Islam is a discipline of good faith, so that even in regard to secular leaders the injunctions are to follow them and cause no disobedience unless there are blatant reasons in justification. Khawarij, the opponent of Ali, thought that he should abdicate but he refused to accede to this demand and took up arms to defend the dignity of the institution regardless of the bloodshed which followed in its wake. Hazrat Musleh-e-Maood, reiterating the same stand, has said:

“God has made me Khalifa just as he appointed Khalifas in the past, although I am at a loss to understand how a person of my shortcomings could earn His choice. The fact remains that He has chosen me for the appointment and now it is not possible for any human being to make me cast away the blessed robe which God has bestowed upon - It is a bounty from God and no one can take it from me.” (*Kaun Hai Jo Khuda Ke Kam Ko Rok Sake*, p. 5)

Prayers in the Event of Illness or Incapacity

However, in the event of a Khalifa’s illness causing temporary incapacity, one must bear in mind the prayers of Moses as reported in the Holy Quran:

“Whenever I fall ill, He brings about my recovery.” (*Surah Ash-Shu’ara*, Verse 8)

Thus, the way out of a Khalifa's illness is not the demands for his removal but incessant prayers for his recovery.

V. Can Khilafat Exist Without Clear Authority?

The fifth and final criticism is that an approved Khilafat or Imamat cannot exist without the support of a *Nasse Sarih* i.e. an authority directly derived from the Holy Quran or the sayings of the Holy Prophet. In consequence, unless the Quran or the Holy Prophet have mentioned by names the Khalifas who were to follow, they do not have the support of *Nasse Sarih*.

This is a self-contrived argument which is not supported by any authoritative injunction. Khilafat falls in the same category of offices as Prophethood and is therefore bound by the same criteria. Real faith consists of believing in the unseen; even prophets and messengers of Allah have rarely been mentioned by name in any ancient scriptures for the simple reason that believers should make use of their own powers of understanding and reasoning to seek them and thus earn the rewards of their labour. The reason for not nominating a Khalifa is therefore strictly because the appointment has to be made by God. The Founder of Ahmadiyyat has stated:

“The reason why the Holy Prophet of Islam did not nominate his successor was because he knew that God would Himself appoint a Khalifa as it was strictly His function” (*Al-Hakam*, 14/4/1905)

Because of this situation, God confirmed in the Khilafat verse of Surah-Noor that He would establish the institution of Khilafat with a view to giving glory and strength to the faith, but did not mention beforehand the names of those who were to occupy this office so that the believers may earn the reward of recognizing them through their own efforts. The absence of their names in the Holy Quran also proves the fact that the Quran also does not think it necessary to do so. The Holy Prophet was in the unique

position that had he nominated a person to succeed him, the entire following would have accepted the appointment, but the Holy Prophet did not think it necessary to do so. Indeed a nomination by the Holy Prophet would have saved Muslims from many untoward incidences which eventually took place around this issue, and would certainly have created a precedence for the Khalifas to nominate their own successors. But the fact is that such a nomination would certainly have been devoid of God's blessings and would not have carried the approval of Muslim democracy. However since this type of nomination is not acceptable in Islam, the Holy Prophet did not nominate a successor even though he had the names of very prominent and capable faithful devotees on his fingertips appropriate for this office, e.g. Abu Bakr who was the Prophet's companion in the cave during his flight from Mecca, Omar who enjoyed full confidence of the Prophet for his sagacity and wisdom, Usman who was married to two of the Prophet's daughters and in whose behalf the Holy Prophet initiated a Ba'it-e-Rizwan, and of course Ali who had been likened to Aaron by the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The Nomination of Hazrat Ali

It may be mentioned here that Hazrat Ali also believed that the naming of a Khalifa was not necessary; indeed, he regarded it against the precepts of the Holy Prophet. At the time he was fatally attacked, Jundab bin Abdallah asked him whether Hazrat Hassan should take the oath of allegiance. Ali replied: "I neither ask you to do so nor say anything against it, you know it better already." (*Tabri*, Vol. VI, p. 346). He is even reported to have added: "I am leaving you in the same state as the Holy Prophet did" (*Tabaqat bin Saad*, Vol. III, p. 34). That is, just as the Holy Prophet had left the question of succession to the believers, so was Ali leaving the matter to be decided by the nation. Hazrat

Abu Musa Ashaari has explained this position by saying: "Khilafat and Imamat comes through consultation but kingship is attained through the power of sword." (*Tabaqat bin Saad*, Vol. IV, p. 113)

From the above discourse it is clear that the naming of Khalifas is against Islamic precepts, at the same time however the Holy Prophet left certain sign-posts to guide the believers in their effort to find a successor, e.g. as is mentioned in his saying that he wanted to nominate Abu Bakr but then abandoned the idea as he believed that God would not accept election of any other person.

Conclusion

We have therefore fully exposed the criticism against Khilafat-e-Rashida through such authoritative sources as the Quranic verses, the sayings of the Holy Prophet and his companions and the verdicts of the Promised Messiah. We have also shown that all arguments against Khilafat-e-Rashida are baseless and without foundation and that the true teachings of Islam require the believers to accept wholeheartedly the election of a Khalifa and to give him their complete and unstinted loyalty. History bears witness to the fact that although the opponents of Khilafat did succeed to some degree in causing confusion and disruption in the ranks of Islam in early ages, they completely failed in their mission of annihilating Islam which continued to grow from strength to strength with the Grace of God. The future of Islam is still more glorious and is certainly completely assured as is indicated in the verse of Khilafat in the Holy Quran.

I request the believers therefore to keep the lessons of history in mind and to know it full well that whenever any forces arose to weaken the institution of Khilafat, they might have succeeded to a limited extent for a limited time, but they never did prevail for any appreciable length of time. Whenever believers made use of their instinctive perceptions and resolutely stood up to guard the institution of Khilafat with complete dedication and obedience, they gained on their stature not only in worldly matters but also in spiritual realms.

We believe that our future is inextricably bound with our allegiance to Khilafat which acts like a protecting shield and leads the way to our prosperity and well-being. Through Khilafat will the final victory of Islam be gained and through it shall the final surrender of evil forces be attained. We must earnestly believe that as long as Khilafat remains in our midst, no outside

forces shall ever be able to cause us any harm and success shall meet us in every field in fulfilment of the Quranic promise “Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth ...”

May God be with us for ever and may we be regarded as His chosen ones for ever. Amen!

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.